

Abstract

Facts are facts. Opinions about the facts differ. It is therefore the job of the peacemaker to bridge the gap between opinions, and in that manner, bring about reconciliation. This much seems obvious. But what if the facts themselves differ? What if the basis for the disagreement is so profound that the world arrays itself differently for each antagonist – and worse: what if the disagreement extends beyond the antagonist, to the peacemaker, who sees the facts themselves in a manner that neither antagonist can accept? What then? Ridiculous, surely: how can the facts themselves differ, when it is one world that we all inhabit? But the facts do differ, because the world is complex beyond the scope of any one interpretation. For this reason, there can be disagreement about first principles, as well as their derivatives. This means that the job of the peacemaker is to establish an accord that allows the facts themselves to become a matter of agreement. To do that, however, the peacemaker has to be able to see the

facts that lead to peace. To do that, he has to be more than a pragmatic broker of opinions. He has to be a man of deep and profoundly rooted morality – and a man of the morality of no man's land, instead of the morality of established territory. No man's land is the unknown, terra incognita. The morality of the previously established is merely a matter of tradition, agreed upon by all. When traditions clash, however, the facts themselves are no longer self-evident. Under such conditions, it is only the individual who has traveled strange lands who can build a bridge. But to travel strange lands is to risk coming under the dominion of the terrible spirits that inhabit the uninhabitable; to risk becoming the strange son of chaos – someone no longer acceptable to those who still dwell quietly at home. To travel strange lands is to see the broader territory, the no man's land surrounding all conditional moralities, and to learn how to negotiate a path there – but also to lose all belief that there is one way, or one set of facts.

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Peacemaking among higher-order primates

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The local incites men to competition. The prizes are local prizes, but by no means unimportant or trivial: status, dominion, material possession, charisma, sexual potency and value. Knowledge of the no man's land surrounding the local nonetheless reduces such competition to the trite, and devalues local victory. Possession of the knowledge that local victory is insufficient makes the individual who can tread strange waters the enemy of the local victor. The peacemaker threatens, with the threat of peace, because peace means change. The local victor may not win again,

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when change comes about. This means that the peacemaker has to offer the victor something more than victory – and that he must know what that means. The local loser, too, may remain unhappy, even preferring his previous or ongoing subjugation – presuming as he is very likely to that the devil he knows is to be preferred to the one he does not.

The pragmatic man is generally philosophical about the local – deeply philosophical, even. He is willing to do what it takes, because when he does what it takes he wins, and his victory justifies his pragmatism. But a locally pragmatic solution to the problem of peace is no solution at all, because it is not opinions about facts that differ among those who are at war. It is the facts themselves. There is no pragmatic solution to the problem of differing facts. That solution has to be derived from the transcendent – and there is no transcendent for the pragmatic man. That means that the peacemaker has to be deeply idealistic.

The pragmatic man regards the idealistic man, not unreasonably, as the slave of ideology, akin, in temperament, to the loser. This is neither surprising nor, locally, inaccurate. Among those who inhabit local environments, and lose, ideology beckons powerfully. The loser is highly motivated to develop an idealistic stance, antithetical to the local – to justify his loss to himself. This

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movement of bad faith makes him deeply unacceptable to the pragmatic man, the local winner. He is in turn motivated to see through the façade of the idealist, to the loser, and to judge him, properly, as resentful, shortsighted, and deeply untrustworthy. But not all ideals are ideologies, and not all idealistic men are losers. Sometimes they are individuals who have sacrificed local victory for something higher. This may make them appear deeply untrustworthy to the master of the local environment, but that is only because the facts that array themselves to him, in consequence of his mastery, remain insufficient. Trapped by the fact of his own local victory, he can only see the reality of what he knows, and does not know that there is also a reality he does not know. The truly idealistic man is an avatar of the reality of the unknown, and not a loser masquerading in moral dress. His difference from the local victor makes him appear in the guise of the defeated – the only opposite the local victor understands. The facts that array themselves to the idealist are therefore invisible to the pragmatic man, and no communication is possible.

How can the facts themselves differ? And if they do differ, how can the gap between men who have adopted antagonistic stances towards one another be bridged? What if there was in fact an infinite array of facts? What if that array manifested itself only in

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part to each individual, or to each culture? What if the infinite array of facts was filtered, idiosyncratically, or ethnocentrically, so that the world thereby derived was idiosyncratically or ethnocentrically unique – and not merely as a matter of opinion? What if was motivation itself, lurking unseen behind both vision and thought, that constructed that filter, letting in light here, but not there, and now, but not then? What if the facts would not come into alignment, between antagonists, until they wanted the same thing? For the facts to come into alignment, the antagonists must want something that transcends the local – even the local victory. They must want peace, more than dominance. They must want peace, more than success. They must want peace, more than security, more than charisma. That means that the peacemaker must be able to sell them something more valuable than victory, more valuable than success. That means the peacemaker must know what it is, that is more valuable than victory. It is for this reason that the peacemaker must be a man of the uncharted seas.

The rules that apply in the transcendent space that surrounds all local environments are not the same rules that apply within those local environments. Humility, in the traditional sense, rather than pride, signals victory in the transcendent, but defeat in the local. Rationality, axiom-predicated in the

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local, must give way to something less conditional, in the transcendent. On uncharted seas, the axioms themselves remain uncertain, and rationality has nothing to grip – nothing firm to manipulate, or order. The meaningful, rather than the rational, rules in the transcendent space surrounding local environments. The peacemaker must therefore be a master of meaning, and not the man who is merely, or even masterfully, rational.

Curiosity is more important than knowledge, in the transcendent environment that surrounds the local. When the axioms itself are uncertain, who is friend and who is enemy is no longer something self-evident. The key to the locked door may be held by the contemptible, from the local perspective. The criminal, or even the heretic, may hold the key. When the facts themselves are uncertain, after all, it is no easy matter to be sure who is criminal, and who heretic. In the transcendent space that surrounds the local, everyone must therefore have a voice. The man truly bereft of direction must sift through the facts offered by all, highest to lowest, in the hope that even what was previously rejected might now be of value. But who will follow the man who takes the advice of a fool? Not the victorious and strong – so peace eludes them. The peacemaker, however, must even listen to the damned. He does not know what the facts are, and even the damned might

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therefore have something valuable to say.

The man who is curious is no longer certain that he is right. Certainty is therefore the enemy of peace. Certainty is the consequence of local victory, and the victorious want to maintain their victory, not to establish peace. In consequence, the victorious substitute judgment for curiosity. In the local environment, the damned, who deserve to be damned, stay forever damned. Justice demands that they lose their voice, as punishment for their transgressions. If peace, rather than victory, is the goal, however, then the damned must be allowed their moment, even if they are in league with the devil himself.

Impatience is a virtue in the local environment. When the facts are not in dispute, good and evil are defined sharply and crisply. Figure is figure and ground is ground. There is no value in standing about, when the good beckons clearly. It is time, instead, to make progress – to lead, to follow, or to get out of the way. When the facts themselves are in dispute, however, there is nothing left but patience. The invisible becomes visible of its own accord, in accordance with its own frame of time, and there is no pushing when the direction to push cannot be established. The quiet voices that beckon beyond the din of the obvious can only be heard by the man who is patient enough to let even the stones speak. No pebble can be left unturned, if what has been

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lost has not yet been found. Even the women and children must therefore be

allowed their say. The peacemaker's actions, then, will be of a sort that the locally pragmatic will find intolerable.

Local victory is admirable in the local environment, but victory, as the father of pride, blinds the victorious to the transcendent, the source of peace. This means that the peacemaker, who wants to get the facts straight, must remain unconcerned with his own status. The damned, after all, cannot speak, without an advocate. To become an advocate of the damned, the peacemaker must abandon his local pretensions, and his desire for status. Otherwise he cannot listen. But if he serves an advocate for the damned, then he risks developing sympathy for the devil himself. That very sympathy makes him unacceptable to the local victors – and maybe even to himself.

In the transcendent environment, the place where peace is made, what has won has not yet been won, and what has been lost has not yet been lost. All conditional values become relativized, outside the dominion of the local. The earth no longer circles the sun. The peacemaker must therefore lose his bearings, and risk vertigo – must in fact become accustomed to vertigo, and no longer seek to retreat to stable ground. This means that courage must become allied with

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curiosity, outside the local environment – courage, and faith. The local victor has no faith; needs no faith. His axioms are not subject to doubt, because his operations, predicated on those axioms, have brought victory. Victory verifies presupposition, and sets it in stone. What is set in stone has become self-evident, no longer subject to doubt, and therefore requires neither faith nor courage to accept. Faith only becomes necessary, when the facts themselves are in dispute, because faith is predicated on a relationship with the transcendent – on a relationship with the voice that beckons from no man's land. The peacemaker must therefore be a master of courage and of faith; must be impervious not to doubt, but to the axiomatic and rational certainty of the victor.

Patriotism is a virtue in the local environment, but it is a vice in the transcendent environment, and it dooms the peacemaker. The patriot who mediates between two antagonists merely brings a third antagonist to the table. If he is a local victor, particularly if someone else has won his victory for him, he merely imposes his victorious viewpoint on the conflict, and so introduces a third set of troublesome facts. Under such conditions, he can only complicate the problem, and risks making it worse, with his pride, and his certainty, and his charisma, grounded in his undeserved status, as foreign local victor. The

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peacemaker must therefore be the man without a country – a citizen, as it were, of no man's land. If he is not, then he desires the brokerage of peace in a foreign land as a feather in his cap, or a scalp on his belt. He wants to bring peace, to increase the possibility of victory and stability in his own, local environment, and not to serve as a mediator between the transcendent and the local, at unspecified cost to himself. There is no reason to trust such a man, and he will not see the obvious, when seeing the obvious becomes necessary.

Clarity of vision is a virtue in the local environment, but justice itself is blind. What is clear is only clear when figure and ground are well established; when the axioms themselves are not a matter of question. This means that the peacemaker must feel his way. To feel one's way is to make intimate contact with the unknown, and to risk the contamination that intimate contact may bring. To feel one's way is also to proceed slowly. A blind man may stumble, fatally, over unseen obstacles, and therefore proceeds with care. To feel one's way is also to make new contact with the familiar, whose true contours have become obliterated, in knowledge, by habit and presumption. To feel one's way, finally, is also to embody the horror of the violated, and the victory of the resentful and cruel. To feel one's way, antennae no longer used must be re-extended; must extend

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themselves into every nook and cranny, despite the habitation of those crannies by the damned.

Outcome is a virtue in the local environment. Product is a virtue in the local environment. But outcome and product are not necessarily virtuous in the transcendent environment that surrounds the local. What is it that is being produced? What is it that qualifies as outcome? Such questions have no answer, when the facts themselves are in question. Peace must therefore be a journey – and a journey to an unspecified destination. The peacemaker is a guide, in a country whose topography remains uncertain. As a guide, he has to be going somewhere – but where? Speed is a virtue in the local environment. If the direction is uncertain, however, then speed may be a vice. Rapid movement in the wrong direction is worse than slow movement, even painfully slow movement, in the wrong direction. Besides: how can a man serve as a guide in a territory whose topography is unknown? His journey must be directed by something that beckons from far above the horizon. If the scene shifts, and new mountains arise where only plains existed before, he must have set his vision high enough so that the stars can still be seen. He must therefore have seen the stars that beckon beyond the mountaintops of his own home, so that he can recognize them when he is a stranger in a strange land.

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Predictability is a virtue in the local environment, but integrity is a virtue in the transcendental domain from which peace descends. The local victor can be a man of lead, heavy, solid – even corruptible, if such corruption has served his victory. The peacemaker must a diamond, by contrast – something from which light shines forth, even though reflected; something simple and translucent, but also something hard beyond belief. The base is purified, according to the voices of tradition, by repeated application of heat and pressure. Judicious application of heat and pressure tempers, without making brittle. The forges of the gods exist in the transcendent domain, beyond the local. The peacemaker must have subjected himself to the heat and pressure of these forges; must have become something hard and translucent, in consequence, but also something protean and subtle. Gemstones shine most brightly out of the darkness, not the light. There is not enough contrast, in the light. The peacemaker must therefore have looked long enough into the abyss to partake of the darkness of the abyss.

Self-regard is a virtue in the local environment, but a vice in the transcendent. In times of peace, said Nietzsche, the warlike man sets upon himself. Only the warlike man, who has set upon himself – as if he himself was his own worst enemy – can possibly have brought himself through the fire to peace. Self-regard may be a

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precondition for local victory, as the confident tends to win, but it is an impediment to purification by fire, and the ability to make peace. The man who does not know himself as a viper cannot understand the viper and its desire to bite and to poison. The man who has not seen that his hands have also been dipped in blood can never listen to the perpetrator, and must shrink as well in horror from the victim. The victim presupposes the perpetrator, and the perpetrator must be felt out, not seen. It is too terrifying to make intimate contact with the perpetrator, if one's hands are not already soaked in the blood of the victim. The peacemaker must have no compunctions about the violation of corpses, to bring about peace. The dead can still speak, but they have to be listened to.

The man with a disharmonious household can master the local environment, but he is lost in the transcendent, and cannot serve as a peacemaker. The man with a grudge is still innocent of all crimes, and cannot serve as a peacemaker. The man with unpaid debts is a victim of karma, which blinds him to the transcendent, and cannot serve as a peacemaker. The man who has peers seeks mastery of the local environment, and cannot serve as a peacemaker. The man who is afraid of war cannot serve as a peacemaker. The peacemaker must love war – must in fact generate war around him, constantly, so that the need for war does not

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accumulate, and explode. The peacemaker brings a sword, not peace.

Peacemaking must be a vocation, and not an occupation. Peacemaking cannot be something that is done, by a peacemaker, but something that is, about the peacemaker. In his local environment, therefore, the peacemaker must be the man who has strived for peace, not victory – but he must also be the man who could attain victory, indisputably, if that was his desire. The morality of the loser, who sees victory slip away, easily becomes cowardice; something that seeks revenge, and revolution for revenge, not for peace. Not even for victory: even the victory that the loser strives towards is illusory, something not designed for dominance, but only for destruction of what currently exists. The peacemaker cannot be a loser, therefore, just because he is not a local victor.

The local victor is replaceable, but the peacemaker is not. The local victor is a machine – a very efficient machine, to be sure, but still a machine. The peacemaker is neither a factory product, nor a machine. In consequence, he must be he who cannot be replaced. This means that the peacemaker, hard and protean, must also be idiosyncratic, as well as universal. There is nothing more common than the unique, but there is also nothing more difficult to attain. It is the uniqueness of the peacemaker that makes him able to listen. If he is a local victor, then

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he is an avatar of the enemy, in precise proportion to his local victory. If he is a local loser, then he is an avatar of the enemy, in proportion to his loss. If he is unique, however, then he is an enemy to his local environment, whether he is being regarded by the victor or the loser. Being the other, the enemy, he can listen to the other, then enemy. Listening, he can make peace.

The downtrodden are the losers to the local victor. To the peacemaker, however, the downtrodden are the evidence that the local victory is too local. The peacemaker must therefore attend to the downtrodden, whose suffering is the gateway to the transcendent. But if he listens with sympathy, then he can no longer attend to the local victor, and must become his enemy. So he must always remember to look at the blood on his own hands, while he is listening to the downtrodden, and to thereby maintain his solidarity with the perpetrator.

The local victor is a master of technique. The peacemaker has no technique, although he is also a master. In the transcendent, technique is limitation. Pride in skill is still pride. Where pride dominates, the facts themselves fall into dispute. Because the peacemaker has no technique, he must attend. To what? To what announces itself as important, when victory is not the aim. When the facts that give rise to peace announce themselves to the man whose aim is peace, he can then point the way. Desiring

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peace, he sees new facts, and is filled with enthusiasm for those facts. Enthusiastic, he masters his anxiety, his frustration, his shame, his self-consciousness, and his guilt. Rising above his guilt, he can look over the blood on his hands, and see what still beckons. Observing his enthusiasm, the local victors, satiated, deadened, brutalized and bored by their victory, become jealous, and look, as well. Observing his enthusiasm, the local losers rise above their defeat, inspired by the evidence of hope embodied before them, and see what beckons, using the eyes of the peacemaker as their own. Thus, the peacemaker sees new facts, redemptive facts, and allows them to imbue him with life. The peacemaker can then transmit that life through the substance of his own body, to the antagonists, victors and vanquished. The antagonists, blessed with the eyes of the peacemaker, come to see their enemies for the first time. Guided, implicitly, in this manner, they may rise above their own desire for victory, and their own subjugation to defeat, and seek peace.

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